



EXCISE

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EUR/NE:RGRAY (SUBS)

NEA/IRN:HPRECHT (SUBS)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 068897

E.O. 12065 GDS, 3/19/85 (MIKLOS, JACK), NEA

TAGS:PINS, AF, UK, UR, PEPR

SUBJECT: IRANIAN REPORT THAT HERAT HAS FALLEN

REF: (A) LONDON 05552 (B) KABUL 2101

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

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2. IT APPEARS THAT

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FROM SAME SOURCE AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY KABUL (REF B). AT THIS TIME, WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT INFORMATION TO CONFIRM THIS REPORT THAT REBEL FORCES CONTROL PART OR ALL OF HERAT.

3. IT DOES SEEM, HOWEVER, THAT TARAKI IS FACED WITH THE MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO HIS REGIME SINCE LAST APRIL'S COUP. IN OUR VIEW, THE DRA SIMPLY CANNOT TOLERATE THE LOSS OF A MAJOR CITY TO DISSIDENT FORCES AND WILL USE EVERY RESOURCE AT ITS DISPOSAL TO ATTEMPT TO QUELL THE REVOLT IN HERAT. IF THIS EFFORT FAILS, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT TARAKI WILL TURN TO MOSCOW FOR HELP. SOVIET AID COULD TAKE THE FORM OF STEPPED UP DELIVERIES OF EQUIPMENT, INCREASED

NUMBERS OF ADVISERS OR PERHAPS DIRECT INTERVENTION. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD STEER CLEAR OF THE LATTER OPTION BECAUSE OF THE ADVERSE REACTION SUCH A MOVE WOULD HAVE ON MOSCOW'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE AREA.

4. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE DRA FACES A QUANTITATIVELY AND QUALITATIVELY DIFFERENT THREAT IN HERAT FROM THE INSURGENT ACTIONS UNDERWAY IN EASTERN AFGHANISTAN. CONTINUED OCCUPANCY OF A MAJOR CITY BY REBEL FORCES WOULD PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT SAFEHAVEN FOR OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES AND WOULD ENCOURAGE FURTHER ANTI-DRA ACTIVITIES ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. AN ANTI-DRA IRAN WOULD ALSO HAVE EASY ACCESS TO REBEL FORCES IN HERAT AND COULD PROVIDE A SOURCE OF SUPPLY TO THE OPPOSITION IF IT CONCLUDED THAT THE TARAKI REGIME SHOULD BE OUSTED.

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5. WE REMAIN OF THE OPINION, HOWEVER, THAT TARAKI CAN HANG ON AS LONG AS HE CONTROLS KABUL AND THE MILITARY THERE. WE NOTE THE REGIME HAS TAKEN SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS TO INSURE THE PRESENCE OF LOYAL OFFICERS IN KEY POSITIONS IN OR NEAR KABUL. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT TARAKI WOULD BE IN REAL DIFFICULTY IF WE BEGIN TO SEE DESERTIONS OR OTHER SIGNS OF DISLOYALTY AMONG THE KABUL GARRISON OR EVIDENCE OF MOB ACTIONS IN THE CAPITAL. SO FAR WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT THIS HAS OCCURRED.

6. THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN IS CLEARLY TENSE; WE

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